

Message Text

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 /064 W
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R 201820Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 8401

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: DC OPENS NEW PHASE OF PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD NEGOTIATIONS

REF: ROME 7554

SUMMARY. THE DC BEGAN A SECOND ROUND OF BILATERAL PARTY MEETINGS MAY 20 CONFIDENT THAT THE TECHNICAL-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS HAVE IDENTIFIED SUFFICIENT AREAS (PUBLIC ORDER, THE ECONOMY) FOR A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, EVEN IF ON A MORE LIMITED SCOPE THAN INITIALLY CONTEMPLATED. DC OFFICIALS HOPE THE CONCLUDING STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS (APPROVAL BY THE INDIVIDUAL PARTIES AND "SANCTIONING" OF THE ACCORD AT A "COLLEGIAL MEETING") CAN BE WOUND UP IN FIFTEEN DAYS' TIME. WHILE THE DC WILL STRESS THE TECHNICAL, OPERATIVE NATURE OF AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT, THE PCI AND LEFT PARTIES WILL SEEK TO EMPHASIZE ITS POLITICAL ASPECTS. THE PCI SEEMS TO HAVE RETREATED FROM ITS MAXIMALIST DEMANDS FOR "POLITICAL GUARANTEES." SOME KNOWLEDGEABLE DC SOURCES NOW BELIEVE THAT NO CHANGE IN THE ANDREOTTI CABINET IS LIKELY (EITHER THROUGH A RESHUFFLE OR APPOINTMENT OF

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TECHNICIAN STAND-INS FOR THE PCI). FINALLY, WHILE THE PCI WILL BE EXPECTED TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF THOSE FEW, SPECIFIC MEASURES INCLUDED IN A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, THE PCI WILL CONTINUE TO ABSTAIN ON CONFIDENCE VOTES. THE DC APPARENTLY BELIEVES THAT THIS WILL SATISFY ITS INSISTENCE AGAINST ANY CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DC-LED NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD ENTERED INTO A NEW AND POSSIBLE SEMI-FINAL PHASE MAY 20 WITH A SECOND ROUND OF BILATERAL PARTY MEETINGS AT THE HEADS OF PARTY LEVEL. THE DC DELEGATION MET WITH THE PCI IN THE MORNING AND WILL SEE THE PSI IN THE AFTERNOON. TALKS WITH THE PRI AND PLI ARE SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY MAY 24, WITH THE PSDI WINDING UP THE SERIES ON MAY 25. THE PURPOSE OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL ROUND IS TO ASSESS THE POSITIONS OF THE SIX "CONSTITUTIONAL ARC" PARTIES FOLLOWING SIX DAYS OF TECHNICAL-LEVEL TALKS THAT CONCLUDED ON MAY 15.

2. THE TECHNICAL TALKS FOCUSSED ON FOUR SPECIFIC AREAS FOR A POSSIBLE PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD--PUBLIC ORDER, THE ECONOMY, EDUCATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCING. THE GREATEST ATTENTION IS BEING GIVEN TO THE FIRST TWO OF THE FOUR THEMES WHICH WILL APPARENTLY BE AT THE HEART OF ANY EVENTUAL AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH LITTLE SPECIFIC INFORMATION HAS BECOME AVAILABLE, SOURCES CLOSE TO THE NEGOTIATORS TELL US THAT THE TALKS WERE DETAILED AND CONCRETE IN THEIR FOCUS. THE IMF LETTER OF INTENT WAS USED AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THE ECONOMIC TALKS WITH THE DC SEEKING SOME FURTHER CONTROL ON THE "SCALA MOBILE" AS WELL AS REDUCTIONS IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING LEVELS. DRAFT GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION ON PUBLIC ORDER (PREVENTIVE DETENTION, DEMILITARIZATION AND UNIONIZING OF POLICE, SECURITY SERVICE REORGANIZATION) AND EDUCATION (THE MALFATTI

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UNIVERSITY REFORM BILL) PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE EXPLORATION OF POSSIBLE "CONVERGENCIES" ON THESE ISSUES.

3. THE RESULTS OF THE TECHNICAL-LEVEL TALKS WERE APPARENTLY SUFFICIENTLY POSITIVE TO PERMIT THE DC DELEGATION TO EXPRESS OPTIMISM THAT AN AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED ON CERTAIN, SPECIFIC ISSUES. THIS WAS ESSENTIALLY THE MESSAGE IMPARTED TO DC PARLIAMENTARY GROUP LEADERS ON MAY 19 ACCORDING TO SOURCES WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE BRIEFING PROVIDED BY FERRARI-AGGRADI, PICCOLI AND GALLONI. THEY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO MINIMIZE, HOWEVER, THE SERIOUS DIFFERENCES THAT CONTINUE TO EXIST ON MANY ISSUES. RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE SHARPLY DIVERGENT VIEWPOINTS AT THIS TIME, THE DC WILL SEEK A MORE LIMITED ACCORD COVERING THOSE AREAS IN WHICH A CONSENSUS CAN BE DEVELOPED. THE SALIENT FACT IS THAT ALL OF THE PARTIES REGARD ACHIEVEMENT OF SOME KIND OF A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD AS POLITICALLY NECESSARY

EVEN IF LIMITED IN SCOPE.

4. WHILE THE DC AND PCI POSITIONS ON MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES ARE IN CONFLICT (REPORTEDLY, ECONOMIC POLICY AND EDUCATION REFORMS), DC SPOKESMEN HAVE PUBLICLY DESCRIBED THE PCI AS "MORE RESPONSIBLE AND CONSCIOUS OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION" THAN THE PSI. THIS, THE DC AND PCI HAVE REPORTEDLY REACHED CONSENSUS ON AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA AMENDING THE DC'S CONTROVERSIAL "PREVENTIVE DETENTION" BILL (ON THE BASIS OF THE BONAFACIO PLAN -- ROME 7275), BUT THE PSI CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN ITS STOUT OBJECTION ON THE BASIS OF DEFENSE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES. ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES, THE PSI CONTINUES TO TAKE POSITIONS THAT ARE POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING TO THE PCI, AND IN EFFECT, CAN ONLY MAKE BERLINGUER'S TASK MORE DIFFICULT IN GETTING INTERNAL PCI AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT MODERATE, DC-SUPPORTED POLICIES
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OVER THE OPPOSITION OF THE PSI. AFTER A MUCH PUBLICIZED MEETING BETWEEN BERLINGUER AND CRAXI ON MAY 18, BOTH LEADERS ANNOUNCED THEIR "SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT" ON THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE TALKS. HOWEVER, MOST OBSERVERS DO NOT CREDIT THE PCI-PSI SHOW OF UNITY AS ANYTHING MORE THAN WINDOW-DRESSING. DC LEADERS CONTINUE TO COMPLAIN THAT THE PSI AGREES ON DEFINING THE ILLS BUT DOES NOT COME UP WITH ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR CURES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 8401

5. WHEN THE CURRENT ROUND OF BILATERAL TALKS CONCLUDES AT THE MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK, THE PARTY LEADERS HOPE TO HAVE A DRAFT AGREEMENT WHICH COULD BE PRESENTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE DELIBERATIVE BODIES FOR APPROVAL. IN THE CASE OF THE DC, A DIRECTORATE MEETING WILL PROBABLY BE SCHEDULED AT THE END OF NEXT WEEK FOLLOWING ANDREOTTI'S VISITS TO GREECE AND ROMANIA AND HIS PARTICIPATION AT MAY 27 CEREMONIES IN PALERMO MARKING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SICILIAN REGION. THE PSI HAS ALREADY SCHEDULED A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING FOR MAY 25. ASSUMING THAT THE PARTIES REACH AGREEMENT ON A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, IT IS EXPECTED THAT A "COLLEGIAL" MEETING OF ALL SIX PARTIES WOULD BE HELD IN ORDER TO INDICATE FORMAL ADHERENCE. SPEAKING TO THE PRESS, DC DEPUTY SECRETARY GOLLONI THOUGHT THE WHOLE PROCESS COULD BE WOUND UP IN FIFTEEN DAYS' TIME, IE. THE WEEK OF JUNE 6TH.

6. THE PCI, PSI AND PSDI TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO GET THE DC TO PRECEDE THE CURRENT ROUND OF BILATERAL TALKS BY A COLLEGIAL MEETING. THIS WOULD HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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EMPHASIZED THE "POLITICAL" NATURE OF THE PROGRAMMATIC NEGOTIATIONS, AN ASPECT WHICH THE DC OBVIOUSLY SEEKS TO PLAY DOWN. WHILE THE DC WILL SEEK TO PORTRAY AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT ON A FEW SPECIFIC POINTS AS A KIND OF "TECHNICAL TRUCE" OF LIMITED POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE PCI AND THE LEFT PARTIES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY DRAMATIZE A CONCLUDING COLLEGIAL MEETING AS GRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF THE PCI'S ENHANCED GOVERNMENTAL ROLE.

7. WHAT OTHER POLITICAL "EVIDENCE" ARE THE PCI AND LEFT PARTIES LIKELY TO OBTAIN? THE PCI ENTERED INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS ON MAY 5 DEMANDING EFFECTIVE POLITICAL "GUARANTEES" TO ASSURE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD WILL BE CARRIED OUT. THE POSSIBILITY OF A GOVERNMENT SHUFFLE OR NOMINATION OF TECHNICIAN-MINISTERS AS STAND-INS FOR THE PCI WAS THEN WIDELY DISCUSSED. IT NOW APPEARS BY NO MEANS SO CERTAIN THAT A GOVERNMENT SHUFFLE IS IN THE CARDS. AS PART OF THE PCI'S QUIET RETREAT FROM ITS MAXIMALIST POSITIONS, THERE IS NOW LESS TALK OF POLITICAL "GUARANTEES". WELL-INFORMED DC SOURCES NOW BELIEVE THAT NO CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE ANDREOTTI CABINET

WILL BE NECESSARY. FURTHERMORE, WHILE THE PCI WOULD BE EXPECTED TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF THOSE FEW SPECIFIC MEASURES INCLUDED IN A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, THESE SOURCES MAINTAIN THE PCI WILL CONTINUE TO ABSTAIN ON CONFIDENCE VOTES. THE DC BELIEVES THAT THIS WILL SATISFY ITS INSISTENCE AGAINST ANY CHANGE IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. COMMENT: AS THE NEGOTIATIONS ENTER INTO THE FINAL STAGES, THE ATTENTION THAT THE DC HAD PURPOSEFULLY FOCUSED ON TECHNICAL ISSUES WILL NOW SHIFT TO POLITICAL QUESTIONS. IF THE DC IS ABLE TO LIMIT THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF AN ACCORD ALONG THE LINES DESCRIBED, IT WILL PROBABLY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN REDUCING THE POLITICAL CONTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD TO THE UNAVOIDABLE MINIMUM. THE DC IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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UNDER AN ILLUSION, HOWEVER, THAT THE PCI'S FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD IS NOT WITHOUT IMPORTANT POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. END COMMENT.GARDNER

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